



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Administrative Policies and Procedures: 15.1

Subject: Adoptive Placement Considerations

Supersedes: None

Local Policy: No

Local Procedures: No

Training Required: No

Approved by: *George Mattanary*

Effective date: 04/01/98

Revision date:

Application

To All Adoption Services Employees.

Authority: TCA 36-1-101 - 36-1-206

Policy

When placing a child for adoption, DCS staff must consider a variety of factors in determining the placement that is in the best interest of the child.

Procedures

- A. Special needs** Identify any physical, educational, psychological/psychiatric, emotional, or behavioral issues of the child that would place significant challenges on the adoptive placement and/or which would require specific resources or special skills or attention from a parent.
- B. Race of child**
1. The adoptive placement of a child will not be delayed or denied on the basis of the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive parent or the child involved.
 2. The race, color or national origin of a child may not be considered except for a **compelling reason**. Any consideration of race based on a **compelling reason** must focus on the specific needs of that specific child and must be based on factors that would promote the best interest of

the specific child. (Examples of **compelling reason**: The child who is fourteen years of age or older must consent to his/her own adoption and, even after counseling, refuses to consent to the adoption by parent(s) who are of a race or ethnicity different than their own. A child was abused by a person of a race or ethnicity different than their own and they have a documented fear of such persons.)

3. Race considerations are not permitted to be based on generalizations or personal values and should not be routinely made. **Race may not be used as a factor for an infant child.**
4. A request for the consideration of the use of race as a factor in the selection criteria requires a review by the Director of Adoption Services/Designee.

C. Adoptive parents

1. Prospective adoptive parent(s) will not be denied the opportunity to become an adoptive parent on the basis of the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive parent or the child involved.
2. Prospective adoptive parent(s) may indicate the characteristics of the child they feel they can most successfully parent. These characteristics may include but are not limited to gender of the child they wish to adopt, age or age range of the child, race(s) of the child, number of children/siblings they wish to be considered for or adopt and the level of special needs the child may bring to the adoptive placement.
3. The prospective adoptive parent(s) ability and willingness to meet the special needs of the child must be considered. The characteristics of the child they have identified as the child they feel they can most successfully adopt must be considered against the characteristics of the child for whom placement is sought. (Example: The child is a victim of sexual abuse, has been in counseling and may require ongoing or additional counseling or possible residential treatment in the future. The family would need to have indicated their willingness to discuss or accept this background of the child they wish to adopt and have indicated in their assessment the strengths and support systems they possess in order to parent a child with this historical background and/or on-going need.)
4. Should prospective adoptive parent(s) wish to adopt a child of a race or culture different than their own, the adoptive parent(s) must complete the Transracial/Transcultural

Questionnaire either during the adoptive parent preparation process or at any point after approval and they indicate their desires to adopt a child of a race or culture different than their own. In discussing these related issues, staff will use the Assessment for Transracial /Transcultural Parenting. (See Bulletin 50, December 30, 1994.)

D. Siblings

Siblings are to be placed together when at all possible and when it serves the best interest of the children involved. To consider an adoptive placement that involves separating the siblings, refer to the existing adoption policies. The decision to separate siblings must be approved by the Team Coordinator serving the geographic area where the children reside and are receiving service. In the event that the children are in various placements outside one geographic area, the decision will be made by the Team Coordinator representing the area of the county of venue based on the information and recommendations of the Team Leaders and Team Coordinators representing the areas serving the children.

E. Child's preference

The child must have input into the qualities he/she desires in an adoptive family. If the child is age 14 or older, he/she must consent to the adoption by completing Form CS-2585, *Consent To Adopt By Minor Who Is Fourteen (14) Years of Age or Older*, (See Bulletin 45, SS-6-95, December 28, 1995 for form and instruction.) Should the child who is 14 years of age or older be disabled or unable to consent to his/her own adoption, a guardian ad litem must be appointed by the adoption court. The guardian ad litem must complete and file Form CS-2586, *Consent By Guardian Ad Litem To Adoption of Mentally Disabled Minor Who is Fourteen (14) Years or Older*, with the court either denying or consenting to the adoption. (See Bulletin 45, SS-6-95, December 28, 1995 for form and instruction.)

Forms

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| CS-2585 | Consent To Adopt By Minor Who Is Fourteen (14) Years of Age or Older |
| CS-2586 | Consent By Guardian Ad Litem To Adoption of Mentally Disabled Minor Who is Fourteen (14) Years or Older |

Collateral Documents

Bulletin 50, SS-94-22, December 30, 1994, Transracial/Transcultural Questionnaire Assessment for Transracial/Transcultural Parenting
Bulletin 45, SS-6-95, December 28, 1995

Standards

None